

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Advisory Board

11.20.08 Meeting minutes

BOS Meeting room

Present:

John McCormack, Chairman
Gary Daniels
George Infanti
Tom Wilson

Excused:

Dave Roedel
Al Hicks
Tom Brennan
Katie Chambers

Bill Parker, Director Community Development/TIF Administrator
Jim DeStefano, Grubb & Ellis/Coldstream RE
Janet Langdell, Planning Board Chairman
Kathryn Parenti, Recording secretary

John McCormack called the meeting to order at 7:30AM.

Review of Agenda & Minutes

J. McCormack reviewed the agenda. He inquired if anyone had received any feedback from Jack Dugan. B. Parker noted had been in contact with Don Zizzi who is happy with their efforts but had not received any response from J. Dugan and stated he would call and invite him to the next TIF meeting, if the board thought that was a good idea. J. McCormack said he had not received any response either but thought an invitation would be good.

T. Wilson made a motion to accept the minutes as written. G. Infanti seconded; all were in favor.

Brox Property Update:

Jim DeStefano, Grubb & Ellis

J. McCormack stated the board needed to decide if they were continuing the contract with Grubb & Ellis. He recommended extending the contract.

J. DeStefano stated Grubb & Ellis would continue to work on this project. He noted they have 150 listings that, at the end of their contracts, Grubb & Ellis felt they had run out of time and energy with these projects. He stated he did not feel that way with this project. He has three (3) people in the Amherst area who will work on this, along with an entire team in Nashua.

J. McCormack stated he was disappointed Jacob Akers was no longer with the company but there is a team to back up what J. Akers had done and feels Milford is well served.

J. Destefano agreed to continue on with the contract.

J. DeStefano then went on to provide an update on the property and noted J. Akers had been very good at providing information to the town and to the industry. He noted they are sending out additional advertising, 1200 fliers of all available industrial space to continue to push hard to get the word out that this property is available. He noted they were at the Souhegan Valley Expo and advertised the parcel there. Their goal is to get in touch with light industrial, manufacturing and distributing companies in southern New Hampshire from Manchester down to north of Route 495. This was the sixth time the list was being distributed and some companies are tired of hearing from them and some are not. He noted they are running into a lot of cautious companies but on the other hand, there are still some thriving companies that will eventually need 60-70,000 square feet of space; some need less than that. One candidate is in Amherst and does not want to move to the Nashua area since their distribution area is toward the Keene area; that's the type of candidate they are looking for. He noted Grubb & Ellis has had an increase of 27% in gross income but their leasing income is 1/3 of what it was a year ago; there is virtually no leasing going on and he's not sure when that's going to change. Lease prices are low, as

low as \$2 a square foot for 10-20,000 square feet and goes up to \$5.50 a square foot. Landlords are even offering up to one year of free rent. He stated there was no way to build and keep competitive in today's market. He noted they had recently closed on the former Atomic building in Amherst and noted it was a lengthy process since lenders are requiring due diligence. There are still users purchasing properties but they are mainly single tenant assets. He stated the medical industry was still strong while it is a mixed bag for residential uses – new construction is dead since ancillary businesses just are not out there any longer. He stated it was great having J. Akers here but he has learned the market is slow here; there are a lot of listings but not a lot of activity. He was sorry to report there wasn't anyone who was interested in the property at this time. If they get some engineering done and provide some tax incentives, that may garner some interest. J. McCormack asked who will be the new main contact. J. DeStefano replied he will be assuming that role and will see how it goes since he is the sales and marketing manager; this will give him a chance to get out in the field more. He stated he will be proactive in communicating with companies and he will definitely know if anyone is looking at this area. He noted this property is in all the data bases and he wants to make sure it is available and well presented to all. He also said he can try to pull companies into a different market, which is not uncommon. He is not discouraged but is hoping the economy stabilizes soon. He said financing is a real concern; there are half the lenders there were a year ago. Many companies are downsizing and the Union Leader recently reported that unemployment rates have been projected to go up to 8%. He thought once there is more information available regarding the development of the land and after discussions on how the land could be developed, it could be a 2-5 year time frame for things to happen with that property.

MIDC Funding:

J. McCormack asked if B. Parker had had time to go and get estimates on the cost of larger scale conceptual plans. B. Parker thought he would go to Meridian Land Services since they have already done surveys of the Brox and Hendrix properties. J. McCormack asked how much money they have access to and what can they afford. B. Parker said there was \$10,000 in the MIDC account from the old days and if MIDC is fading out, Al Hicks thought they would be willing to share the wealth. He was hoping for \$5,000 for which ever parcels J. DeStefano recommends they concentrate on. J. DeStefano stated they would take that information and work on marketing collateral. He recommends the board save a little money at the start for specific uses that might need a modified site plan, especially if someone is looking for 60-70,000 square feet of space. B. Parker asked T. Wilson if there was any problem marketing the Hendrix property too. T. Wilson said no.

Economic Development planning & the role of TIF board Report on Economic Roundtable.

B. Parker stated Cirtronics, Airmar and Hollis Line are doing very well. J. McCormack stated he had spoken with John Siergiewicz of Hollis Line and he said they were very busy with solar panels, etc. T. Wilson noted the demand for wind farms has slowed down dramatically. Six months ago, if you were looking to purchase a turbine, the delivery date was 2010; now they can deliver in a month, a much shorter delivery time. J. Langdell stated existing projects are moving forward but there are no new ones. T. Wilson felt this was a result of the loss of financiers.

G. Daniels asked if the contract with Grubb & Ellis was a one year renewal. J. DeStefano stated they don't usually extend beyond a year and if that doesn't work out, if the town decides they don't have the level of service they had with J. Akers, they can make modifications.

J. McCormack said from the feedback regarding the roundtable, some of the businesses are doing well. G. Infanti stated this was an excellent session and he thought it was great that 26-28 local business people cared enough to spend an evening discussing what will make things better. He thought it was a good cross section of business owners and a lot of interest was expressed. He spoke with two (2) people who could not attend the session and they expressed disappointment that they were unable to attend. J.

McCormack thought it was a good way for people to express their views on important issues concerning the town and the town departments. G. Infanti stated he has never not gotten an answer when he's dealt with the Community Development office; he may not have liked the answer but he's always gotten one. J. Langdell thought some of the negative comments were from situations that may have occurred 5 or 6 years ago and she felt that has greatly improved. J. McCormack noted in his evaluation with Don Zizzi that there was some concern with the length of approval times. He noted there were some overlapping areas that may be frustrating to applicants as time is money and the town needs to recognize that. T. Wilson noted that companies depending on the Town of Milford were more dissatisfied than those selling to outside communities. B. Parker replied that a lot of the dissatisfaction comes from changing from the old ways to the new way and people who have been around a long time are frustrated with the new way. J. Langdell thought the frustration comes from lack of consistency between departments; it's something the town needs to be aware of and try to fix. J. McCormack wondered how to get the feedback to the departments and how to make things more seamless for the businesses. B. Parker thought the key is to get the departments to realize this is an issue. He thought the department heads should meet and work together toward making Milford be pro business. J. McCormack thought the water commission was key in all of this with the new sprinkling and fire codes and the impact on new development. B. Parker thought that was an issue with getting a hotel to come to Milford. John Samonas had gotten an estimate for the water fees for a potential hotel and the commission told him it would be around \$60,000. If economic times are good, that may not be as big an issue but since they are not, it's a huge issue. One of the issues brought up when sending out invitations to the round table was whether or not to invite the boards and commissions. In the end, they were not invited since they might have gotten defensive. They do need to meet with them to show them the issues resulting from the round table. J. Langdell wondered what the next step would be. B. Parker stated they have not formulated the next step. G. Infanti thought inviting one of the water commissioners should be involved in the planning stages and be an integral part of the steering committee for the economic development plan.

J. McCormack asked G. Daniels if any of the selectmen had discussed the results of the round table. G. Daniels said they had not but should the next BOS meeting. J. McCormack noted the MIDC is not directly linked to the BOS like the TIF is so TIF may be more effective. B. Parker stated the planning board process was to develop an economic development plan, then form an economic development advisory committee and then report to the BOS. G. Daniels thought that was effective. J. Langdell thought they should have a solid plan to present to the BOS. J. McCormack noted he and J. Langdell had attended the 5th Monday BOS session recently and noted most people in the audience were concerned with flooding and drainage issues and not economic development. He thought they needed to have more participation to ensure feedback so it doesn't come back to them later. G. Daniels said the BOS has been digging in lately due to past projects involving undevelopable land and no access. The projects must be full blown plan and all bases must be covered. An example of a past project with hidden issues was Kaley Park and the \$500,000 needed to build turning lanes that wasn't brought up in the beginning. Things are being missed in the process. If the complete package is in front of the BOS, they may be more receptive. J. Langdell noted Kaley Park was a wonderful project with unanticipated unintended consequences that should have been dealt with earlier. B. Parker thought the economic development group could pull it all together. J. McCormack wondered how to do this. J. Langdell thought a public forum would be good with follow up with a working committee. She also thought a town-wide survey would be a possibility that would tie in more than just economic development, perhaps seeing what the facilities committee needs. J. McCormack thought he, B. Parker and J. Langdell should work on that.

Next step by TIF Board

J. McCormack, B. Parker and J. Langdell would work together to get input from the town at large and possibly pull in Sarah Marchant, town planner, into the discussion. J. Langdell wondered who, from

MIDC, would give them answers. B. Parker noted they have their annual meeting in December and they would find out then.

Development Update

B. Parker stated Kincaid's Auto Repair was recently granted conditional approval for their relocation to South Street and they are planning to lease their current building. Roger Bucknam has been approved for a 5,000 square foot auto repair facility off of Old Wilton Road. He noted Dan Scanlon of Grubb & Ellis said there was talk about areas for potential retail opportunity; people are still out scouting for space.

Other business:

- **Next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday December 18 at 7:30 AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25AM.

To do items:

- ⇒ Brox priorities
 - Engineering conceptals and overlays
 - Selective tree clearing
 - Write articles for local publications
 - Wetlands study completion
- ⇒ Master plan update
 - Assist Planning Board
 - Identify groups to participate and market master plan update
 - Meet with other communities to discuss their economic development plans and TIF
- ⇒ Vacant lands inventory
- ⇒ Board of Selectmen
 - Provide quarterly updates
 - Introduce Jack Dugan and Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
- ⇒ Meet with MEDC to discuss action plan and involvement
- ⇒ Meet with Water and Sewer Commissioners re: their long term plans

Continuing items:

- ⇒ Website
- ⇒ Education and exposure
- ⇒ Maintain an on-going progress file.
- ⇒ Meet with developers.
- ⇒ State support
- ⇒ Continuous revisions/updates to the Economic Development Self Assessment survey